



Southeast Fishery Bulletin

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Seasonal Prohibition on Fishing for and Possession of Caribbean Council-Managed Reef Fish in Federal Waters of Bajo de Sico begins on October 1, 2015, at 12:01 a.m., Local Time

NOAA Fisheries reminds fishers and the general public that beginning October 1 each year and continuing through March 31 of the following year, no person may fish for or possess any reef fish managed by the Caribbean Fishery Management Council (Council),¹ in or from those parts of the Bajo de Sico management area that are in federal waters. The Bajo de Sico management area is located off the west coast of Puerto Rico (Figure 1) and is bisected by the nine nautical mile boundary between Puerto Rico Commonwealth and federal waters (Figure 1). These regulations only apply in the federal portion of this management area.

The Bajo de Sico management area is bounded by rhumb lines connecting, in order, the following coordinates:

A	18° 15.7' N	67° 26.4' W
B	18° 15.7' N	67° 23.2' W
C	18° 12.7' N	67° 23.2' W
D	18° 12.7' N	67° 26.4' W
A	18° 15.7' N	67° 26.4' W

In addition, fishing with pots, traps, bottom longlines, gillnets or trammel nets, and anchoring are prohibited within the federal waters of Bajo de Sico year-round. During the closure, however, fishers are allowed to harvest spiny lobster and species not managed by the Council, including highly migratory species (HMS) or other non-HMS coastal migratory species.

This action complies with regulations implemented in 2010 under Regulatory Amendment 3 to the Fishery Management Plan for the Reef Fish Fishery of Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands. The Council, in cooperation with NOAA Fisheries, developed this amendment to protect red hind spawning aggregations and large snappers and groupers, and to better protect the essential fish habitat where these species reside.

This bulletin provides only a summary of the information regarding the existing regulations. Any discrepancies between this bulletin and the regulations as published in the *Federal Register* will be resolved in favor of the *Federal Register*.

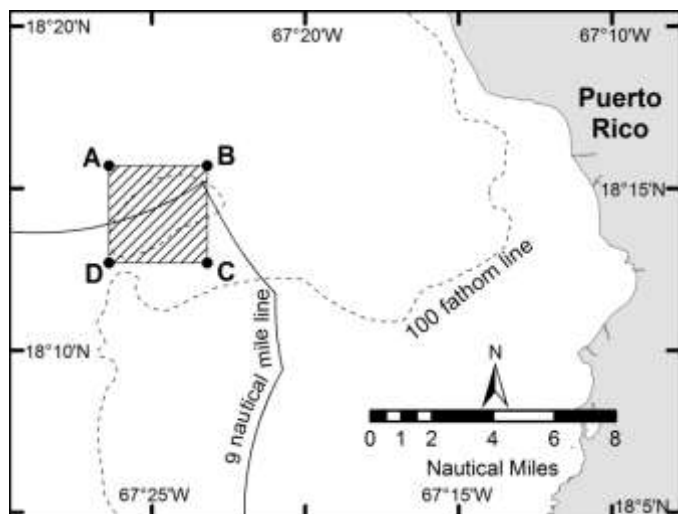


Figure 1. Map showing the Bajo de Sico managed area off the west coast of Puerto Rico.

¹For a complete list of Council-managed reef fish, please see Table 2 of Appendix A to Part 622--Caribbean Reef Fish in federal regulations at 50 CFR Part 622 or contact the National Marine Fisheries Service or the Caribbean Fishery Management Council to obtain a copy of that list.